

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NICE 00288 071442Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 SY-05 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20 OPR-02 A-01 IO-14 CCO-00 /114 W
-----045677 071447Z /47

P 071330Z JUL 78
FM AMCONSUL NICE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1559
INFO AMEMBASSY PRIORITY
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

UNCLAS NICE 288

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, FR, LE
SUBJECT: DEMONSTRATION AT AMCONSULATE NICE

AT 09:30 JULY 7 A GROUP OF ABOUT 20 INDIVIDUALS ARRIVED IN FRONT
OF THE CONSULATE BEARING SIGNS, IN FRENCH, ASKING FOR THE
WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIAN TROOPS FROM LEBANON AND AN END TO THE
"GENOCIDE AGAINST THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS".

THE GROUP POSTED ITSELF IN FRONT OF THE CONSULATE, MADE NO
EFFORT TO HINDER THE ARRIVAL OR DEPARTURE OF INDIVIDUALS FROM
THE BUILDING AND WAS AT ALL TIMES PEACEFUL. THE FRENCH POLICE
WERE ON THE SCENE WITHIN MINUTES AND THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS.
DURING THE ONE-HOUR THEY WERE IN FRONT OF THE CONSULATE THE
DEMONSTRATORS HANDED OUT TWO MIMEOGRAPHED SHEETS TO PASSERS-
BY - ONE, AN OPEN LETTER TO THE AMERICAN CONSUL AND THE US
GOVERNMENT AND THE OTHER A GENERAL STATEMENT. BOTH CONDEMNED
SYRIAN ACTION IN LEBANON ("GENOCIDE AGAINST CHRISTIANS") AND
EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE LONG TERM EFFECTS ON LEBANON'S
INDEPENDENCE. (COPIES BEING POURCHED TO DEPARTMENT AND AMEMBASSY
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PARIS). SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVAL, MR ALEXANDER ASOUAD, WHO CLAIMED
TO BE THE LEADER OF THE GROUP, ASKED TO SEE THE CONSUL.

AFTER CONSULTING WITH PARIS AND OBTAINING THE LATEST US PRESS
GUIDANCE THE CONSUL AGREED TO SEE MR ASOUAD. HE MADE CLEAR
THE DEMONSTRATION WAS IN NO WAY DIRECTED AGAINST THE USA BUT
DESIGNED TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE "KILLING OF CHRISTIANS" IN

LEBANON AND THE DESIRE OF "ALL LEBANESE" TO HAVE THE SYRIAN TROOPS LEAVE LEBANON. HE SAID MOST OF THE DEMONSTRATORS WERE LEBANESE STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NICE AND THEY WERE ALL CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR FAMILIES IN LEBANON. MR ASOUAD HAD LEFT LEBANON 9 DAYS BEFORE TO VISIT HIS SON IN NICE. HE AND OTHER LEBANESE STUDENTS FELT SOME EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE SITUATION IN LEBANON.

THE CONSUL ASSURED MR ALEXANDER ASOUAD THAT THE US GOVERNMENT WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SITUATION IN LEBANON AND EXPLAINED THE GENERAL US POSITION AND EFFORTS MADE BY THE US GOVERNMENT. MR ASOUAD THANKED THE CONSUL AND AGAIN STATED THE DEMONSTRATION WAS IN NO WAY DIRECTED AGAINST THE USA. MR ASOUAD THEN LEFT AND HE AND THE DEMONSTRATORS LEFT THE CONSULATE AREA ABOUT 10:30. THEY PLANNED TO PRESENT PETITIONS TO NICE MATIN (MAJOR LOCAL NEWSPAPER) AND THE PREFET OF THE ALPES MARITIMES.

COMMENT: MR ALEXANDER ASOUAD WAS OBVIOUSLY VERY WORRIED

ABOUT HIS FAMILY AND THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIANS IN LEBANON, A VIEW SHARED BY MANY HERE WHO ARE ASKING THEMSELVES WHAT ROLE FRANCE SHOULD PLAY AND ARE WONDERING IF IT SHOULD BE MORE ACTIVE. PROXIMITY TO THE MEDITERRANEAN AND LONG STANDING TIES TO LEBANON HAVE CREATED ATTACHMENTS TO AND SYMPATHY WITH LEBANON. IN ADDITION, MANY LEBANESE HAVE SECONDARY RESIDENCES IN THE AREA. THE CONSULATE WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW EVENTS RELATED TO THIS ISSUE
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PARTICULARLY IF ANY LOCAL PRESSURE FOR A MORE ACTIVE FRENCH ROLE DEVELOPS.
NOTE: SINCE BEIRUT ON MINIMIZE THIS CABLE NOT SENT TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT.
EDENSWORD

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
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